

What is claimed is:

1. A method of assessing information technology ("IT") products for their target market, comprising steps of:

determining a plurality of criteria that are important to a target market, and at least one attribute to be used for measuring each of the criteria;

specifying objective measurements for each of the attributes; and

conducting an evaluation of an IT product, further comprising steps of:

inspecting a representation of the IT product, with reference to selected ones of the attributes;

assigning attribute values to the selected attributes, according to how the IT product compares to the specified objective measurements;

generating an assessment score, for the IT product, from the assigned attribute values; and

generating a list of recommended actions, the list having an entry for each of the selected attributes for which the assigned attribute value falls below a threshold, each of the entries providing at least one suggestion for improving the assigned attribute value.

2. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the list of recommended actions is generated automatically, responsive to the assigned attribute values that fall below the threshold.

3. The method according to Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

prioritizing each of the attributes in view of its importance to the target market;

assigning weights to the attributes according to the prioritizations; and  
using the weights when generating the assessment score.

4. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the assessment score is programmatically generated.
5. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the step of conducting an evaluation is repeated at a plurality of plan checkpoints used in developing the IT product.
6. The method according to Claim 5, wherein successful completion of each of the plan checkpoints requires the assessment score to exceed a predetermined threshold.
7. The method according to Claim 1, wherein a product team developing the IT product provides input for the evaluation by answering questions on a questionnaire that reflects the attributes.
8. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the assigned attribute values, the assessment score, and the list of recommended actions are recorded in a workbook.
9. The method according to Claim 8, wherein the workbook is an electronic workbook.
10. The method according to Claim 1, wherein a product team developing the IT product

provides input for the evaluation by answering questions on a questionnaire that reflects the attributes, and wherein the answers to the questions, the assigned attribute values, the assessment score, and the list of recommended actions are recorded in an electronic workbook.

11. The method according to Claim 1, further comprising the steps of providing the assigned attribute values, the assessment score, and the list of recommended actions to a product team developing the IT product.

12. The method according to Claim 8, further comprising the step of providing the assessment workbook, following the evaluation, to the product development team.

13. The method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step of assigning a special designation to the IT product if and only if the assessment score exceeds a predefined threshold..

14. A method of assessing an information technology ("IT") product, comprising steps of:  
determining a plurality of criteria for measuring an IT product, and at least one attribute that may be used for measuring each of the criteria;

specifying objective measurements for each of the attributes; and

conducting an evaluation of the IT product, further comprising steps of:

inspecting a representation of the IT product, with reference to selected ones of the attributes;

assigning attribute values to the selected attributes, according to how the IT

product compares to the specified objective measurements; and

generating an assessment score, for the IT product, from the assigned attribute values.

15. The method according to Claim 14, wherein the step of conducting the evaluation further comprising step of generating a list of recommended actions for improving the IT product.

16. The method according to Claim 15, wherein the list has an entry for each of the selected attributes for which the assigned attribute value falls below a predetermined threshold.

17. The method according to Claim 16, wherein each of the entries provides at least one suggestion for improving the assigned attribute value.

18. The method according to Claim 14, wherein the specified objective measurements further comprise textual descriptions to be used in the step of assigning attribute values.

19. The method according to Claim 18, wherein the textual descriptions identify guidelines for assigning the attribute values using a multi-point scale.

20. The method according to Claim 14, further comprising the step of used the generated assessment score to determine whether the IT product may exit a plan checkpoint.

21. The method according to Claim 14, further comprising the step of used the generated assessment score to determine whether the IT product receives a special designation indicating its support of the measurement criteria.

22. A system for assessing information technology ("IT") products for their target market, comprising:

a plurality of criteria that are determined to be important to the target market, and at least one attribute that may be used for measuring each of the criteria, wherein the attributes are prioritized in view of their importance to the target market;

objective measurements that are specified for each of the attributes, wherein the measurements are weighted according to the prioritizations; and

means for conducting an evaluation of the IT product, further comprising:

means for inspecting a representation of the IT product, with reference to selected ones of the attributes;

means for assigning attribute values to the selected attributes, according to how the IT product compares to the specified objective measurements;

means for generating an assessment score, for the IT product, from the weighted measurements of the assigned attribute values; and

means for generating a list of recommended actions, the list having an entry for each of the selected attributes for which the assigned attribute value falls below a predetermined threshold.

23. A computer program product for assessing information technology ("IT") products for their target market, the computer program product embodied on one or more computer-readable media and comprising computer-readable program code means for carrying out the steps of:

recording results of conducting an evaluation of an IT product, wherein the evaluation further comprises:

inspecting a representation of the IT product, with reference to selected ones of a plurality of attributes, wherein the attributes are defined to measure a plurality of criteria that are important to the target market; and

assigning attribute values to the selected attributes, according to how the IT product compares to objective measurements which have been specified for each of the attributes; and

using the recorded results to generate an assessment score, for the IT product, from the assigned attribute values, wherein the generated assessment score thereby indicates how well the product meets the criteria that are important to the target market.

24. A method of assessing information technology ("IT") products for their target market, comprising steps of:

conducting an evaluation of an IT product, further comprising the steps of:

inspecting a representation of the IT product, with reference to selected ones of a plurality of attributes, wherein the attributes are defined to measure a plurality of criteria that are important to the target market; and

assigning attribute values to the selected attributes, according to how the IT

product compares to objective measurements which have been specified for each of the attributes;

recording results of conducting the evaluation; and

using the recorded results to generate an assessment score, for the IT product, from the assigned attribute values, wherein the generated assessment score thereby indicates how well the product meets the criteria that are important to the target market.

25. The method according to Claim 24, further comprising the step of charging a fee for carrying out one or more of the conducting, recording, and using steps.